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Time Change Triggers Kentuckians to ‘Change the Batteries’ *State Fire Marshal urges Kentuckians to be safe*

Frankfort, Ky. (Nov. 2, 2012) – Kentuckians “fall back” this weekend to standard time, and the Division of Fire Prevention says it’s the perfect event to also change the batteries in smoke detectors to ensure they are working.

“Each year we send an important message – make it a habit to check the batteries in your smoke detectors when you change the time on your clocks,” said State Fire Marshal William Swope. “The first line of defense for escaping a fire is early warning. If your home doesn’t have smoke detectors, you should install them. Install one on every floor of your home, including the basement and in each sleeping area,” Swope said.

Without a working smoke detector to issue an early warning, fire can quickly spread throughout a home, blocking escape routes and filling rooms with deadly smoke, Swope said.

In fact, almost two-thirds of home fire deaths in 2005-2009 resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

“The bottom line is that smoke alarms save lives; they should be in every home,” Swope said.

The Kentucky State Fire Marshal’s office encourages Kentuckians to keep in mind the following safety tips:

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.
- Smoke rises. Install smoke alarms, following manufacturer's instructions, high on a wall or on a ceiling. Save manufacturer's instructions for testing and maintenance.
- Replace batteries in all smoke alarms at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps," warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they are 10-years-old or sooner if they do not respond properly.
- Be sure the smoke alarm has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Alarms that are hard-wired (and include battery backup) must be installed by a qualified electrician.
- If cooking fumes or steam sets off nuisance alarms, replace the alarm with an alarm that has an alarm silencing button. An alarm silencing button will reduce the alarm's sensitivity for a short period of time.
- Smoke alarms that include a recordable voice announcement in addition to the usual alarm sound, may be helpful in waking children through the use of a familiar voice.
- Smoke alarms are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These devices use strobe lights. Vibration devices can be added to these alarms.
- Smoke alarms are an important part of a home escape plan.

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